


# Written Directive: 7.13



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| <b>Title: Uniform, Equipment, Dress Code</b>   | <b>Number of Pages: 7</b>              |
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## UNIFORM, EQUIPMENT AND DRESS CODE

Supervisors are responsible for regular inspections of personnel to ensure compliance with this policy.

### **DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT AND/OR PROPERTY**

1. Any member who damages departmental equipment or property due to carelessness shall be guilty of a class D violation.
2. Any member who is involved in an at-fault vehicle collision or causes damage to a police vehicle or property of another while operating the police vehicle in a careless or inattentive manner (as defined by Title 21, §4176 (a) or (b)) shall be guilty of a class "D" violation.

NOTE: In addition to the punishment specified for any violation in this section, officers may be subject to reimbursement fees for the repair or replacement of equipment.

### **SALE OR UNAUTHORIZED EXCHANGE OF UNIFORM**

No member of the department is permitted to sell, give, exchange, or trade a police uniform and/or uniform equipment, or any part of their police uniform and/or equipment to any person who is not a police officer without written authority of the Chief of Police. Violation of this regulation will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class "E" violation.

### **FAILURE TO PROPERLY CARE FOR ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES; DAMAGE OR LOSS OF SAME DUE TO NEGLIGENCE**

Members of the department will ensure that all department equipment is in good working order, clean and conforms to departmental specifications. There will be no alterations of departmental equipment without prior approval of the Chief of Police. Members will be responsible for proper care of departmental property and equipment assigned or used by them. Violation of this regulation will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class "E" violation.

## **REPORTING DAMAGED/INOPERATIVE PROPERTY OR EQUIPMENT**

1. Members are responsible for the proper care of departmental property and equipment assigned to them. Damaged or lost property due to negligence may subject the responsible individual to reimbursement charges in addition to the appropriate disciplinary action.
2. If any loss or damage to departmental property shall occur, the officer shall notify his immediate supervisor and shall immediately submit a departmental information report to their commanding officer, reporting said occurrence. The immediate supervisor will be notified of any defects or hazardous conditions existing in any departmental equipment or property. Violation of this regulation will result in disciplinary action a for a class "E" violation.

## **AUTHORIZED WEAPONS**

Only the following weapons will be carried by members of the department while on or off duty:

1. Only those weapons designated by the Chief of Police, and issued to all sworn personnel, as the authorized departmental firearms will be carried while on-duty. The weapons so designated may consist of a full sized model, and a smaller administrative model.
2. Tactical weapons as authorized by the Chief of Police (i.e., automatic weapons for covert operation.)
3. Approval to carry off duty weapons will conform to the restrictions contained in the Directive entitled "Annual Firearms Training and Qualifications."
4. No member will carry any non-departmental weapon while on duty unless prior consent has been authorized by the Chief of Police.

Violations of paragraphs 1 through 4 will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class "A" violation.

5. All members working uniform Patrol duties, including Watch Commanders and Duty Officers, will wear their Sam Browne belt with its appropriate equipment as described in the Directive entitled "Uniforms and Equipment."

Violations of this paragraph will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class "F" violation.

## **UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT DAMAGE CLAIM**

Any claims for damage to clothing and equipment caused by performance of duty or requests for replacement shall be made in writing through the chain of command.

Members shall not seek in any way, nor accept from any person, money or other compensation for damages to uniforms or equipment incurred by them in the line of duty without first notifying the Chief of Police in writing. When an award of this nature is made by any court of the State, the Chief of Police will be notified in writing.

Violation of this regulation will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class "F" violation.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

The Wilmington Department of Police is a uniformed service where discipline is judged, in part, by the manner in which an Officer wears a prescribed uniform, as well as by the individual's personal appearance. Therefore, a neat and well-groomed appearance by all Officers is fundamental to the Police department and contributes to building the pride and esprit essential to an effective Police agency.

Members shall appear neat and well-groomed on duty at all times, unless a specific assignment dictates otherwise. All articles of the uniform shall conform to departmental regulations, and civilian clothing will not be worn with any part of the uniform. Members are not required to wear their uniforms to and from work; however, if an officer chooses to do so, the uniform will be worn as prescribed in its entirety. Uniforms shall be kept neat, clean, and well pressed at all times. While wearing the uniform, members shall maintain a military bearing. Violation of this regulation, or any of the below listed regulations (1-8), will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class "E" violation.

### **1. Hair Policy:**

The requirement for hair grooming standards is necessary to maintain uniformity within the Police Department. Many hairstyles are acceptable, as long as they are neat and conservative. It is not possible to address every acceptable hairstyle, or what constitutes conservative grooming. Therefore, it is the responsibility of supervisors at all levels to exercise good judgment in the enforcement of Police policy. All police officers will comply with the hair, fingernail, and grooming policies while in any police uniform or while in civilian clothes on duty. Undercover officers or officers on special assignments authorized by the Chief of Police are exempt from this policy while detailed.

Supervisors will judge the appropriateness of a particular hairstyle by the appearance of the official uniform headgear when worn. Headgear will fit snugly and comfortably, without distortion or excessive gaps. Hairstyles that do not allow officers to wear the headgear properly are prohibited.

Extreme, eccentric, or trendy haircuts or hairstyles are not authorized. If officers use dyes, tints, or bleaches, they must choose those that result in natural hair colors. Colors that detract from a professional police appearance are prohibited. Therefore, officers should avoid using colors that result in an extreme appearance. Applied hair colors that are prohibited include, but are not limited to, purple, blue, pink, green, orange, bright (fire-engine) red, and fluorescent or neon colors. It is the responsibility of supervisors to use good judgment in determining if applied colors are acceptable, based upon the overall effect on the officer's appearance.

Officers who have a texture of hair that does not part naturally may cut a part into the hair. The part will be one straight line, not slanted or curved, and will fall in the area where the officer would normally part the hair. Officers will not cut designs into their hair or scalp.

#### **a. Hair (Males)**

Male haircuts will conform to the following standards:

The hair on top of the head must be neatly groomed. The length and bulk of the hair may not be excessive or present a ragged, unkempt, or extreme appearance. The hair must present a tapered appearance. A tapered appearance is one where the outline of the officer's hair conforms to the shape of the head, curving inward to the natural termination point at the base of the neck. When the hair is combed, it will not fall over the ears or eyebrows, or touch the collars, except for the closely cut hair at the back of the neck. The block-cut fullness in the back is permitted to a

moderate degree, as long as the tapered look is maintained. In all cases, the bulk or length of hair may not interfere with the normal wear of headgear. Males are not authorized to wear braids, cornrows, dreadlocks, or twisted hair while in uniform or in civilian clothes on duty. Hair that is clipped closely or shaved to the scalp is authorized.

Males will keep sideburns neatly trimmed. Sideburns may not be flared; the base of the sideburn will be a clean-shaven, horizontal line. Sideburns will not extend below the lowest part of the exterior ear opening.

Males will keep their face clean-shaven when in uniform or in civilian clothes on duty, and are restricted from growing beards and mustaches except as provided herein. Mustaches, if worn by males, must be kept neatly trimmed, tapered, and tidy. Mustaches will not present a chopped off or bushy appearance, and no portion of the mustache will cover the upper lip line or extend sideways beyond a vertical line drawn upward from the corners of the mouth. Handlebar mustaches, goatees, and stingers are not authorized.

Members with a medical condition which may preclude them from shaving shall be permitted to wear a beard, provided that they present a written statement, signed by a qualified physician, verifying the condition. The officer will be required to submit the medical paperwork to the City's Medical Dispensary. The officer will then be evaluated by the City's Physician who will make a recommendation to the Chief of Police. The recommendation will be noted on a Return to Work Status Form (RTWSF) which will be considered a "profile". A profile is considered to be a recommendation to the Chief and not meant to replace Standard of Appearance as specified by the department. Officers with a profile will continue to groom facial hair to no more than ¼ inch from the skin using scissors and/or other grooming methods. Officers with approved profiles will be reevaluated by their physician or dermatologist every 4 weeks to monitor results of treatment and to assess the continued need for the profile. The officers will also be re-evaluated by the City Physician. All profiles will expire in 4 weeks or sooner based on the recommendation of the City Physician in consultation with the officer's physician and if necessary a specialist retained by the City.

Members with a religious belief of wearing a beard shall be permitted to wear a beard, provided that they present evidence to the Chief of Police. Members with a religious belief must adhere to the aforementioned guidelines within section 1-a titled Hair (Males).

Males are prohibited from wearing wigs or hairpieces while in uniform or in civilian clothes while on duty, except to cover natural baldness or physical disfiguration. When worn, wigs or hairpieces will conform to the standard haircut criteria as stated above.

b. Hair (Females)

Female haircuts will conform to the following standards:

Females will ensure their hair is neatly groomed, that the length and bulk of the hair are not excessive, and that the hair does not present a ragged, unkempt, or extreme appearance. Likewise, trendy, styles that result in shaved portions of the scalp (other than neckline) or designs cut into the hair is prohibited. Females may wear braids and cornrows as long as the braided style is conservative, the braids and cornrows lie snugly on the head, and any hair holding devices comply with the standards below. Hair will not fall over the eyebrows or extend below the bottom edge of the collar at any time during normal activity and during the duty day. Long hair that falls naturally below the bottom edge of the collar, to include braids, will be neatly and inconspicuously fastened or pinned, so no free-hanging hair is visible.

Extreme styles that protrude from the head are prohibited. Extensions, weaves, wigs, and hairpieces are authorized; however, these additions must have the same general appearance as the individual's natural hair. Additionally, any wigs, extensions, hairpieces, or weaves must comply with the grooming policies set forth in this paragraph.

Hair-holding devices are authorized only for the purpose of securing the hair. Officers will not place hair holding devices in the hair for decorative purposes. All hair-holding devices must be plain and of a color as close to the officers hair as is possible or clear. Authorized devices include, but are not limited to, small, plain scrunchies (elastic hair bands covered with material), barrettes, combs, pins, clips, rubber bands, and hair bands. Devices that are conspicuous, excessive, or decorative are prohibited. Some examples of prohibited devices include, but are not limited to, large, lacy scrunchies; beads, bows, or claw clips, pins, or barrettes with butterflies, flowers, sparkles, gems, or scalloped edges; and bows made from hairpieces. Officers may not wear hairnets.

## 2. Tattoo Policy

Tattoos or brands that are visible while in uniform, will not be offensive to any other employee and/or member of the community. Tattoos or brands that are extremist, indecent, sexist, or racist are prohibited, regardless of location on the body, as they are prejudicial to good order and discipline within the Department.

## 3. Fingernails

All personnel will keep fingernails clean and neatly trimmed. Males will keep nails trimmed so as not to extend beyond the fingertip. Females will not exceed a nail length of ¼ inch, as measured from the tip of the finger. Females will trim nails shorter if their immediate supervisor believes that the length of the fingernail presents a safety concern, or interferes with the performance of duties.

## 4. Cosmetics

Males are prohibited from wearing cosmetics, to include nail polish. Females are authorized to wear cosmetics with the duty uniform provided they are applied conservatively and in good taste and compliment the uniform. Supervisors at all levels must exercise good judgment in the enforcement of this policy.

Females will not wear shades of lipstick and nail polish that distinctly contrast with their complexion, that detract from the uniform or that are extreme. Some examples of extreme colors include, but are not limited to, purple, gold, blue, black, white, bright (fire-engine) red, khaki, and fluorescent colors. Officers will not apply designs to nails or apply two-tone or multi-tone colors to nails.

Females will comply with the cosmetics policy while in uniform or while in civilian clothes on duty.

## 5. Wearing of jewelry

Officers may wear a wristwatch, a wrist identification bracelet, and a total of two rings (a wedding set is considered one ring) while in uniform. Any jewelry officers wear must be conservative and in good taste.

While in uniform, officers may not attach, affix, or display objects, articles, jewelry, or ornamentation to or through the skin while they are in uniform. This includes, but is not limited to all visible body piercing of the knuckles, tongue, lips, and eyebrows.

Females are authorized to wear prescribed earrings while in uniform. Earrings may be screw-on, clip-on, or post-type earrings, in gold, silver, white pearl, or diamond. The earrings will not exceed 6 mm or ¼ inch in diameter, and they must be unadorned and spherical. When worn, the earrings will fit snugly against the ear. Females may wear earrings only as a matched pair, with only one earring per ear lobe.

Ankle bracelets, necklaces, medallions, amulets, and personal talismans or icons are not authorized while on duty and in uniform.

### **MANNER OF DRESS OF DUTY**

Normally, members will appear for duty in the uniform of the day; however, commanding officers may prescribe other clothing as required by the nature of the duty to which the particular member is assigned.

Members assigned to uniform duty shall wear the prescribed uniform of the day. Uniform caps shall be worn with the frontispiece attached and the officer's badge shall at all times be worn on the outer-most garment.

Members assigned to attend school, seminars or light duty status shall dress as specified in Directive entitled "Schools/Seminars Dress Code."

Violation of this regulation will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class E violation.

### **UNIFORM RESTRICTIONS**

Division Commanders may prescribe divisional uniforms tailored to the specific duties of the division. Prior to implementation these uniforms must be approved by the Chief of Police. If approved by the Chief these uniforms will be described in divisional standard operating procedures.

All ranks of personnel performing general uniformed assignments, (i.e. Patrol functions, extra jobs etc.) will comply with the following guidelines:

1. The wearing of any incomplete uniform is prohibited.
2. Members shall not alter uniforms or equipment in any way. Uniform hats will be worn as issued. No alteration to the uniform hat is permitted. (i.e. creasing the sides down).
3. Members are forbidden to exchange uniforms for the purpose of passing inspection.
4. Unless specifically authorized clothing and accessories shall conform to the following:
  - a. Socks - black or dark blue only.
  - b. Neckties - black clip-on type as provided by the department.
  - c. Undershirts - Undershirts are optional; however, if an officer chooses to wear an undershirt, it must be white, during daywork, if exposed, when worn with short sleeve, open collar uniform shirts. Black or navy blue undershirts are permitted for nightwork.

- d. Shoes - black laced, military low cut dress type, plain toe shoes, all black military boots or all black sneakers are the only acceptable shoes while in uniform.
- e. Gloves - to be worn during inclement weather only; the glove will be either a black leather or a black knit dress glove. Specialized gloves will be permitted based on assignment and the approval of the Chief of Police.
- f. Scarves - black or navy blue only.
- g. Ear Muffs - black only

NOTE: Violation of this regulation will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class E violation.

### **SERVICE STRIPES**

One service stripe will be issued to each officer at the completion of every three years of service. The stripes are authorized for display on the left sleeve of the winter shirt and the dress coat. The first stripe will be affixed approximately five inches from the end of the left sleeve, with subsequent stripes placed directly adjacent to the existing stripe, progressing up the sleeve to the elbow. Failure to display or improper display of service stripes will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class "F" violation.

### **UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT**

All members of the department shall maintain in good order all uniforms and equipment. All equipment must be clean and conform to departmental specifications. Any alterations to equipment must be approved prior to implementation. Violation of this regulation will result in disciplinary action as specified for a class "F" violation.

### **MANDATORY WEARING OF BODY ARMOR**

1. All law enforcement officers assigned to a uniformed function and non-uniformed sworn personnel engaged in field activities are required to wear the issued soft body armor on duty unless exempted as follows:
  - a. When the Medical Dispensary determines that the officer has a medical condition that would preclude use of body armor; or
  - b. When the officer is involved in undercover plainclothes work that his Division Commander indicates may be compromised by use of body armor; or
  - c. Where the officer is assigned to perform an administrative function; or
  - d. When the Division Commander determines other circumstances where it may be inappropriate to mandate body armor.
2. Officers shall wear only departmental issued body armor.
3. Body armor must be concealed except in exigent circumstances.